



Frequently Asked Questions

Foreign Students

Question: Am I required to hold an umbrella permit in order to remain in the CNMI?

Answer: No you are not. You are allowed to maintain your status as long as you have a valid CNMI Foreign Student Permit. However, prior to the expiration of your permit (which should be prior to November 28, 2011), you will have to apply for a foreign student visa through a Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) certified school or program. It is highly recommended that you visit the U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement website <http://www.ice.gov> and follow the link to SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program) <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/index.htm> for more info.

Question: As a holder of a foreign student umbrella permit, am I entitled to live and maintain my status in the CNMI until November 28, 2011?

Answer: No you are not. Umbrella permits are conditional in nature and will only be valid through November 28, 2011 if you maintain compliance with the requirements of the issuance of the permit. For example, if your regular CNMI-issued foreign student permit expires on April 30, 2010, in order for you to qualify to maintain your CNMI permit status through November 28, 2011, you are still required to renew your permit with the Department of Commerce by paying annual renewal fee for extension to April 30, 2011, and – upon expiration, a prorated application fee that extends your permit through November 28, 2011 only if you maintain compliance with the permit requirements.

However, if you wish to live and maintain your foreign student status in the CNMI beyond November 28, 2011, you will have to apply for a foreign student visa through a SEVIS certified school or program.

Question: Am I required to wait until November 2011 prior to applying for a foreign student visa with SEVIS?

Answer: No you are not. Foreign students are free to immediately apply with a SEVIS certified school or program.

Question: I am an existing foreign student but was only issued a temporary umbrella permit on or prior to November 27, 2009. When can I expect to receive an actual, longer term permit (identification card)?

Answer: The Department of Labor will have actual permits printed and ready for distribution by January 4, 2010. Provided your application for new or renewal was processed and approved by Commerce, a permit will be forthcoming.

Question: **I am a new foreign student who was issued an umbrella permit but not a regular CNMI permit prior to November 27, 2009. Am I going to receive two permits?**

Answer: Yes. You should have an umbrella permit and a regular CNMI Foreign Student permit (ID card) that will be available for pick up by January 4, 2010. Please visit Commerce's Foreign Investment Office at that time for the status of your permit.

Question: **I did not pick up my umbrella permit by the November 27, 2009 deadline. Can I still pick up my umbrella permit from Commerce?**

Answer: No you cannot. If you failed to pick up your umbrella permit prior to November 28, 2009, you have essentially forfeited your opportunity.

Question: **Am I mandated to hold an umbrella permit? What is its purpose?**

Answer: No. The purpose of the umbrella permit is to provide for a conditional permit which gives you the option to renew with the CNMI or converting to an E2 CNMI visa prior to November 28, 2011.

Question: **I do not have an umbrella permit, and I would like to maintain my status here in the CNMI. What do I do now?**

Answer: To have legal status in the CNMI, you will need to have on hand a current CNMI Entry Permit issued prior to November 28, 2009. Assuming that all you have is a current CNMI permit that will be expiring, you will need to convert immediately a foreign student visa through a SEVIS certified school or program.

Question: **How is SEVIS related to my foreign student permit expiring with CNMI?**

Answer: **Prior to Entry Permit expiration**, you will need to work with the Educational Institution you are attending. They should be able to assist you through with the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) certified school or program; provided, however, that the Educational Institution you are attending is SEVIS approved. All non-immigrants seeking student status should work with Educational Institutions that are certified by SEVIS for processing of "student visas." It is highly recommended that you visit the U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement website <http://www.ice.gov> and follow the link to SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program) <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/index.htm> for more info.